BRITISH COLUMBIA

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August 6, 1999

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate remained fixed at 8.6% (seasonally adjusted) in July.** However, the lack of movement in the unemployment rate masked changes in both employment and the labour force. The number of people either working or looking for work in BC fell by 15,000 (-0.7%) in July. The downsizing of the labour force was big enough to offset a net loss of 15,200 jobs (-0.8%), leaving the province's unemployment rate unchanged from June. This marked the fourth time in the last five months that both the labour force and the number of people employed in the province have shrunk.

  Canada's unemployment rate edged up from a nine-year-low of 7.6% in June, rising to 7.7% last month. The increase in the unemployment rate came as the Canadian labour force expanded faster (+0.4%) than employment (+0.3%). The same factors contributed to rising unemployment rates in New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Quebec were the only provinces where the jobless rate fell last month. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Among the regions, unemployment rates ranged from 7.9% (3-month moving average) in Vancouver Island/Coast to 10.7% in Northeast.** There has been a significant turnaround in the job market in northeastern BC, where just a year ago the unemployment rate (4.0%) was among the lowest in the country.

  On a more positive note, Cariboo's unemployment rate (9.8%) dropped below ten percent for the first time since October of 997. However, residents of Thompson/Okanagan faced double-digit unemployment rates (10.1%) for the fifth straight month. Residents of the two most populous regions of the province, Mainland/Southwest (8.1%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (7.9%) continued to experience the lowest unemployment rates in the province. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Self Employment

- **The number of self-employed British Columbians declined for the fourth straight month in July, falling to 1.4% (3-month moving average, seasonally adjusted) below the June level.** The drop in self-employment was part of a nationwide trend. The number of self-employed Canadians decreased 0.9% in July. Newfoundland (+0.7%) and Ontario (+0.6%) were the only provinces where the self-employment rose last month. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **BC manufacturers are becoming more optimistic about business conditions in the province.** Twenty-nine percent of those surveyed in July expected to increase their production in the third quarter, compared to just 10% who anticipated decreases. The balance of opinion on new orders was also very positive, with 30% saying that their orders would rise while 8% expected declines. A growing number of manufacturers anticipate that they may have some trouble keeping up with the demand for their products. For the first time since 1995, the percentage of manufacturers expecting the number of unfilled orders to increase (19%) exceeded those who thought they would be lower (18%). Three out of four manufacturers expect no production difficulties in the third quarter.
  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wages, salaries and benefits received by workers in BC declined in May, falling to 1.1% (seasonally adjusted) below the April**

Report **Interprovincial mobility of recent immigrants**

Did you know...

82% of British Columbines participated in some nature-related activities in 1996, but they weren't all out rock climbing. Activities such as reading or watching films and TV shows about nature had the highest participation rate (73%). Relatively few people took part in more strenuous activities such as cycling in natural areas (9%), climbing (7%), or cross-country skiing (3%).

level. Labour income was down in every province except Ontario (+0.6%) and Quebec (+0.0%). At the national level, it was unchanged from April. *Source: SC, Catalogue 13D0016XPB*

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities rose 32.7% (seasonally adjusted) between May and June, boosted by strong gains in both the residential (+21.2%) and non-residential (+44.2%) sectors.** Canadian permits were up 4.9%, reflecting a 5.8% drop in Ontario, and more moderate growth or declines in most of the larger provinces.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Department store sales in British Columbia and the territories were 6.9% higher this June than in the same month last year.** The increase in sales was the strongest since December 1997 (+11.2%). However, department stores in this region have not benefited from the growth spurt seen in the rest of the country, where sales have been outpacing those in BC since early 1998. In June, sales rose at rates ranging from 8.4% in Manitoba to 19.1% in Newfoundland/PEI. They were up 11.6% at the national level. Year-to-date, department store sales in BC and the north were only slightly (+0.5%) higher than in the first six months of 1998, reflecting the up and down performance of these retailers during the last few months.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Family Income

- **The median total income of husband-wife families in British Columbia was $51,300 in 1997, more than double the income of lone-parent families ($21,600) and almost three times that of unattached individuals ($18,600).** Eight in every ten families had some employment income. In most (70%) husband-wife families with employment income, both spouses were working. The husband was the sole bread winner in 22% of these families, while the wife was the only earner in 8%.

  Among the provinces, family incomes were highest in Ontario ($55,300), Alberta ($54,700) and BC, with incomes in all other provinces falling below the national level of $50,800. Lone-parent families and unattached individuals in these provinces were also better off than in the rest of the country. The Canadian median income for lone parent families was $21,300 in 1997, and $16,500 for people living alone.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Seniors

- **The median total income of BC seniors (aged 65 and over) remained unchanged at $16,800 in 1997.** In real terms (taking inflation into account), this represents a drop of 0.8% from 1996. Most Canadian seniors saw their buying power deteriorate in 1997. Nationwide, the median income of seniors rose $100, or 0.6%, to $16,000 in 1997, but this gain was eroded by a 1.6% increase in the consumer price index. Seniors in Newfoundland, PEI and the territories were the only ones whose income grew more than the inflation rate. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Compared to other Canadian seniors, BC residents are relatively well off.** They received a median income of $16,800 in 1997, more than in any province except Ontario, where the median total income was $18,100. BC and Ontario were the only regions where the median income of seniors was above the Canadian level, while seniors in Atlantic Canada and Quebec received significantly less than those in other parts of the country. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **In BC, government transfers accounted for just over 40% ($4.8 billion) of the $11.4 billion total income of seniors.** Old Age Security ($2.5 billion) and CPP benefits ($2.0 billion) made up most of these transfers. Private pension funds contributed $2.9 billion to the pocketbooks of BC seniors, and they received another $1.9 billion in income from their investments. One in six taxfilers aged 65 and over reported some employment income. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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Infoline Report:

Interprovincial mobility of recent immigrants

Contact: Frank Ip / (250) 387-0336

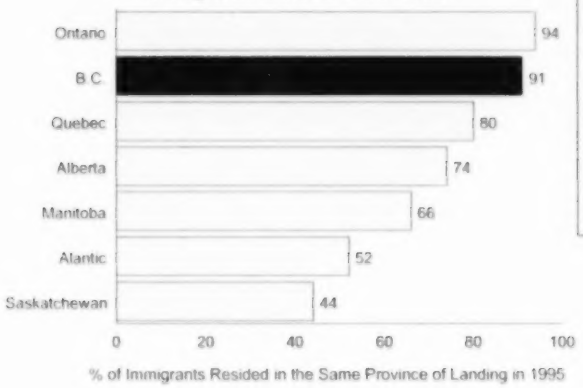
Originally published in First Quarter 1999 issue of *Immigration Highlights*. Annual subscription: $30 + GST

B.C. has been gaining immigrant population from other provinces

Of the immigrants who landed in B.C. between 1980 and 1995, approximately 9% had left the province by 1995. On the other hand, approximately 23% of the immigrants who resided in B.C. in 1995 came from other provinces. Taken together, B.C. was a net recipient of immigrants as a result of interprovincial migration of immigrants during the 1980 to 1995 period. This difference could be expressed in terms of a loss/gain ratio of about 1 to 2.9 persons. In other words, for every 10 immigrants B.C. lost to other provinces, we gained 29 from other provinces. Among all provinces, B.C. has the second highest immigrant retention rate after Ontario during the period of study.

Immigrant Retention Rates

Immigrants Landed 1980-1995



A majority of those moving to B.C. were from Ontario

Of those who moved to B.C. from other provinces, 41% came from Ontario, 25% from Alberta and the remaining 34% from other provinces. On the other hand, Ontario has also been a major recipient of immigrants who left B.C. Of those who left, 67% went to Ontario, 21% to Alberta and 12% to the rest of Canada.

New Data Makes Mobility Study Possible

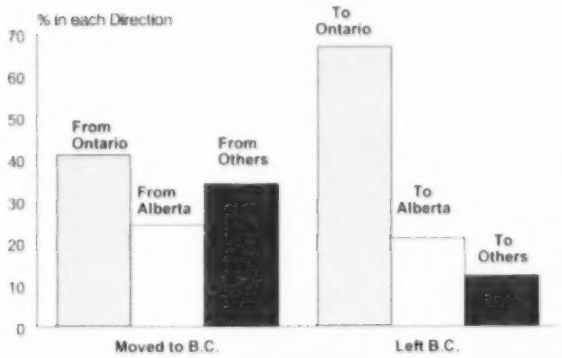
This study is made possible by using data available from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) developed jointly by Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This database is created by combining income tax records from Revenue Canada and immigration records for a sample of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1995. By comparing an immigrant's province of initial landing and the province of residence as indicated on the same immigrant's tax return, interprovincial mobility of this immigrant can be determined.

In this study, the province of residence of a sample of immigrants aged 15 or older in 1995 was compared to their original province of landing. If an immigrant's province of landing differed from his/her province of residence as of 1995, it can be inferred that this immigrant had moved interprovincially between the time of landing and 1995. It should be noted that multiple movements of immigrants were not tracked by this database. Hence, mobility in this study simply means change of province of residence of immigrants between two points in time.

The sample in the database is large enough to be representative for the general immigrant population who landed between 1980 and 1995. For example, the actual number of immigrants aged 15 and older who landed in B.C. between 1980 and 1995 was about 347,789 persons. The sample contained within the IMDB was 194,565 immigrants, about 56%. More articles using the information provided by the IMDB will be featured in the forthcoming issues of ***Immigration Highlights****.*

Immigrants landed in 1980-1995

Mobility as of 1995



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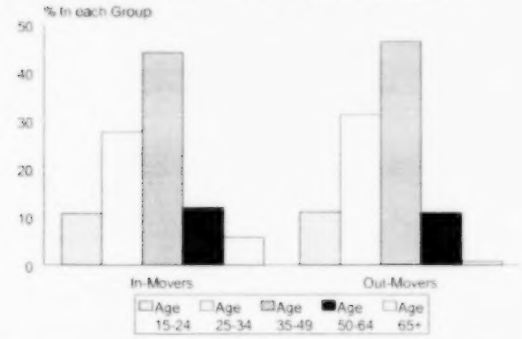
Movers were mostly aged 35 to 49

Although there were significantly higher numbers of immigrants who moved to B.C than left B.C for other provinces, the age distribution of the in-movers was very similar to that of the out-movers. A majority of these movers were between the ages of 35 and 49 at the time of their initial landing.

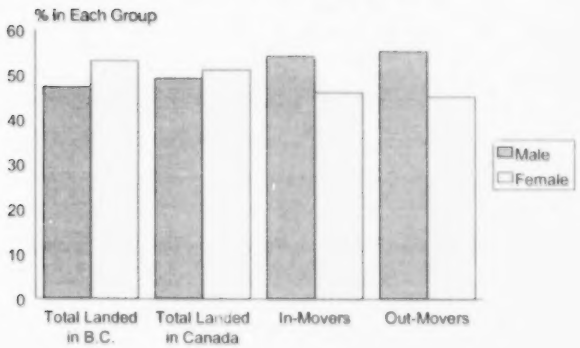
Age Distribution of Immigrants
Who Moved between B.C. and Other Provinces



Male immigrants were more likely to be movers

There were more male movers than female movers during the period of study. In either direction of interprovincal movement, there were about 55% male movers versus 45% female movers. Although this difference seems small, it can still be inferred that male immigrants have a higher propensity to be interprovincial movers, given that there have been more female than male immigrants arriving in B.C. and Canada over the last two decades.

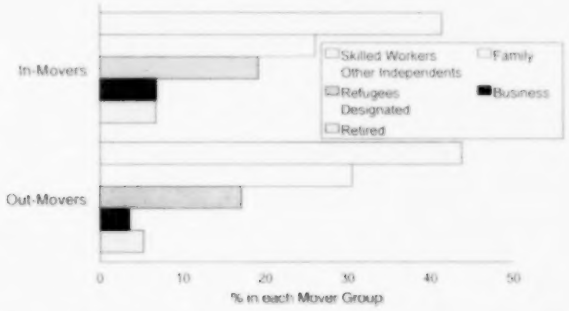
Immigrants by Gender
Landed in 1980-1995



Skilled workers and independent economic immigrants more likely to move

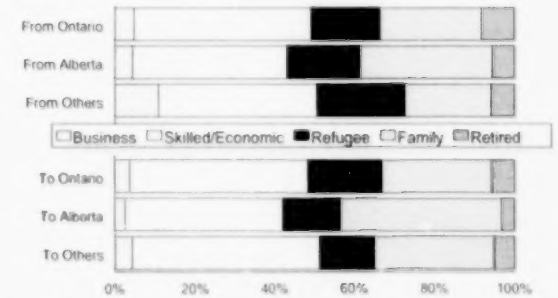
As was expected with more movers in the middle age groups, immigrants in the categories of skilled workers and other independents were also more mobile due to different job market situations between provinces at various periods of time. In both directions of interprovincal movement, more than 40% of the movers were in the skilled workers and other independent classes. Family classes of immigrants formed the next most mobile group whereas business and retired immigrants tended to be the least mobile.

Immigrants By Mobility by Class
Landed in 1980-1995



Comparing movers by class between provinces of destination and origin also indicated that B.C. tended to receive more business and refugee immigrants from provinces other than Ontario and Alberta. On the other hand, a higher proportion of refugee immigrants left B.C. for Ontario than for other provinces. Also, compared to other provinces, immigrants moving to B.C. from Ontario were more likely to be in the skilled worker or other independent classes.

Immigrants by Mobility by Class
Landed in 1980-1995



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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) May	3,001	14.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) May	2,355	13.6
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) May	2,757	-0.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Jun '99	one year ago
BC	111.5	1.0
Canada	110.5	1.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jul '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,058	0.9
Employed - BC	1,881	1.2
Unemployed - BC	178	-2.6
		Jul '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.6	8.9
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.7	8.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Aug 4/99	Aug 5/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.05	6.75
- 5 year	7.75	7.15
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Aug 4/99	Aug 5/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4895	1.5160
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6711	0.6590
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	May '99	one year ago
BC	622.77	1.3
Canada	605.83	0.3

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

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- Exports, May 1999

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, July 1999

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